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THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, DISARMAMENT AND OTHER RELATED FIELDS

Working paper submitted by Cuba

1. The 1992 meeting of the Disarmament Commission included an item in its programme of work entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields", and it was decided to establish a Working Group which would be entrusted with that item.

2. The Working Group agreed to consider the following four questions, identified as the substantive aspects of the item:

(a) Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security;

(b) Science and technology for disarmament;

(c) The role of science and technology in other related fields;

(d) The transfer of high technology with military applications.

3. In order to facilitate their consideration, the ideas, suggestions and proposals submitted by Cuba on this item are set out below in accordance with the Working Group's decision to subdivide the item into the four aspects listed in paragraph 2.

(i) Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security.

Disarmament and arms control agreements should place greater emphasis on the qualitative aspects of the arms race, in order to prevent the improvement of

the various types of armaments, in particular, weapons of mass destruction, which is aimed at increasing their destructive power.

The application of science and technology for legitimate defence purposes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations is a right of all States.

The imposition of any sort of blockade against a country for political reasons which is designed to prevent that country from having access to scientific and technological advances of an exclusively peaceful nature should be prohibited, unless it has been approved by the international community.

The use of scientific and technological advances to extend the arms race into outer space should be prohibited.

Measures should be adopted to promote the use of scientific and technological advances for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the economic development of all States, in particular the developing countries.

To this end, it may be appropriate to adopt a set of norms or guidelines to safeguard the exclusively peaceful use of scientific and technological advances and of those which could be dual-purpose.

Countries with resources and installations devoted to scientific and technological research for military purposes should adopt measures of a unilateral, bilateral or multilateral nature to limit the scope of such research, with a view to preventing the further acceleration of the qualitative arms race.

Measures should be adopted to guarantee a more equitable and fair distribution of state-of-the art scientific and technological advances and to ensure that the developing countries have adequate access to these advances.

The possibility should be explored of adopting a code of conduct for scientists and specialists engaged in research work with a dual application, with a view to ensuring that such research work serves peaceful purposes only.

Efforts should be made to promote the right of all States to enjoy the benefits of scientific and technological advances for peaceful purposes, without prejudice to sovereignty or national security.

Agreements should be adopted on the search for greater transparency and openness in the development of research which could have a dual application, so as to ensure the peaceful use of its results, especially in the areas of nuclear, space and computer technology, and, at the same time, to safeguard information related to national security which has no direct connection with the obligations entered into.

(ii) Science and technology for disarmament.

The exchange of information on aspects related to the application of the development of science and technology for disarmament should be promoted, either through the organization of international meetings and events or through the preparation of documents and reports, in order to improve the existing methods

used to carry out the various verification activities envisaged in the agreements on disarmament and arms limitation or reduction.

(iii) The role of science and technology in other related fields.

Unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures should be adopted to ensure that scientific and technological advances are applied without damage to the environment and without causing environmental pollution.

(iv) The transfer of high technology with military applications.

In Cuba's view, universally acceptable international norms or guidelines should be established to regulate international transfers of sensitive technologies, while ensuring at the same time that those norms do not deny access to high technology products, services and know-how for peaceful purposes.

Furthermore, measures should be adopted to promote the process of transparency and greater openness in carrying out research which may have dual applications, in order to ensure the peaceful use of its results.

At the same time, effective and verifiable measures should be adopted to prevent dangerous scientific and technological advances in areas of research and development which may be used to produce certain types of weapons, as in the case of biological weapons, or at the stage of production, as in the case of chemical weapons.

The draft guidelines submitted by Argentina and Brazil on this subject may serve as a basis for the adoption of the international norms mentioned above.

However, Cuba believes that the following ideas should be included in an updated version of these guidelines:

(1) The technologies and sensitive services that will be subject to international regulation should be identified, and the corresponding multilateral agreements covering these technologies should be adopted.

Each such agreement should include an appropriate mechanism to update the list that is approved.

(2) A register should be established in the United Nations in order to monitor and update this type of technology and the corresponding services and to receive information on future trends in the development of dual-use science and technology and on the obligations which may be assumed to guarantee their exclusively peaceful use.

One aspect which should be taken into account when preparing the final report on the Disarmament Commission's consideration of this topic is the role of the United Nations in this sphere.

The United Nations is an appropriate forum for the multilateral consideration of this issue, and measures should be adopted to promote international events and meetings on this subject.

In order to lay the groundwork for a multilateral approach to international transfers of sensitive technology products, services and know-how, the United Nations should establish and keep up to date the fullest possible register of restrictions or limitations established by States in this field, including laws, regulations and other relevant national provisions that are in force.

One of the most important measures that could be adopted at the international level and should be promoted by the United Nations is the conversion of all military research and development activities carried out by Member States to peaceful purposes for the benefit of the economic and social development of all countries.

In order to achieve greater transparency in this field, it might be useful for the United Nations to provide advice to Member States on establishing groups of experts with the basic objective of carrying out an analysis of this topic.